

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**RIO NUEVO/DOWNTOWN, ARTS, CULTURE AND HISTORY**  
ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION REPORT AND SUMMARY  
March 9, 2006

Council Member Trasoff called the Subcommittee meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. The meeting was held in Ward 6 Conference Room (3202 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street), Tucson, Arizona.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Council Member Nina Trasoff, Subcommittee Chair, Ward 6  
Council Member Jose Ibarra, Ward 1  
Vice Mayor Steve Leal, Ward 5

STAFF PRESENTERS: Greg Shelko, Rio Nuevo Director  
Jim Glock, Transportation Director

GUEST PRESENTERS: Don Bourn, Bourn Partners, Inc.  
Jim Campbell, Oasis Tucson, Inc.

AGENDA ITEM/MAYOR AND COUNCIL ACTION	STAFF ACTION
<b>1. Call to Order</b>  The meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.	
<b>2. The Post Redevelopment Project – Status &amp; Design Discussion</b>  Mr. Shelko provided a brief status on the project. City staff and Bourn Partners have negotiated over 98% of the development agreement, which describes the project and performance requirements. It outlines what the City will provide and what the developer will do. It will be finalized in the next month.  At the last subcommittee meeting, Mr. Bourn was asked to look at the scale and exterior design (most notably the parking above the retail) of the proposed building. Due to the significant premium on speed and concern about the design that was presented last week, Mr. Bourn decided to revert to the original plan that was approved by the Rio Nuevo selection committee, Rio Nuevo Board and City Council in June 2004. The plan today calls for approximately forty units, 10,000 square feet of ground floor retail and one level of underground parking. They don't intend to demolish the bank annex building.  Vice Mayor Leal said Mr. Bourn was responsive to the issues that were raised around the architecture.  Council Member Trasoff asked for reaffirmation that the development agreement could be completed within the next 30 days. Mr. Shelko stated that the development agreement would go to the Rio Nuevo Board on April	

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12<sup>th</sup>, and Mayor and Council for approval the following week (April 18<sup>th</sup>). In response to Vice Mayor Leal's request last week, there's a clause in the development agreement that states that in the event Mr. Bourn is able to bring the bank back to a negotiating table, the City will enter into some negotiations to see if a mutually agreeable phase II can be developed.

Vice Mayor Leal asked should we be successful in that, would we be looking at more parking, more units, or a little of both? Mr. Bourn responded hopefully both, but he's taking the attitude that they are going full speed ahead on this. He's not going to have any false hope. If it can be done quickly he may be able to redesign the project; however, he is not going to plan on that. If it could be done, it would certainly make a better project overall. He would also have to work with the City on the public parking element.

Council Member Trasoff asked if there were strict deadlines and guidelines in the development and performance criteria? Mr. Shelko responded that the development agreement is essentially a performance-based option. For example in the first six months Mr. Bourn would bring his design for administrative review and submit a marketing plan. In subsequent 3-month time frames, Mr. Bourn would begin pre-sale activity and advance design work, deliver documents to the City for permitting and obtain preliminary and firm construction financing commitments from a lender. Provided Mr. Bourn keeps performing, the option automatically extends through these performance periods and he delivers earnest money at the commencement of each phase.

Mr. Bourn added that it's his goal to have concept plans in for City review within 30 days.

Council Member Trasoff asked what his intention was for the annex? Mr. Bourn responded the original facade has been ruined and can't be restored. He will do something that is consistent with the original plan and do something that everybody is comfortable with. He will solicit community input for the annex and the Indian Trading Post.

Mr. Shelko said the Indian Trading Post remains part of the deal. The contract speaks to renovating the exterior of the building, so there's some performance obligations to that as well, specifically, completion of exterior work during the new construction period.

Council Member Trasoff inquired about the interior? Mr. Shelko responded that interior rehab would be driven by market interest.

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<p>Vice Mayor Leal indicated keen interest in getting the original neon hoop dancer reinstalled or reproduced and Mr. Bourn indicated his intent to do so.</p> <p>Chair Trasoff thanked and commended City staff and Mr. Bourn for their teamwork.</p>	
<b>3. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Underpass/Plaza Centro Redevelopment Project – Status</b>	
<p>Mr. Glock put the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpass in context. It's an integral project associated with the extension of the Barraza/Aviation Parkway along the Stevens Alignment to provide a vehicular relief valve for Broadway and Congress, which are carrying the bulk of downtown's entry traffic today. At issue now is the current physical plan that it created expansive areas of concrete, asphalt and open space at the expense of real estate development opportunity on the east end of the downtown.</p>	
<p>Mr. Campbell's proposal, Plaza Centro, may change some street and circulation patterns, but also allows for some very opportunistic land massing where some development could occur. This proposal could utilize the exiting historic underpass in its current location. There were some significant engineering and circulation problems with respect to his initial concept. As directed by the subcommittee two weeks ago, staff met with Mr. Campbell and each agree an expanded underpass generally along the present alignment would meet the access needs of the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue shopping district and Congress Street entertainment district, vs. the dual underpass concept proposed.</p>	
<p>For the foreseeable future, Congress and Broadway would need to remain as one-way pair, until a Stevens bypass is established. A traffic plan design is needed in order to allow them to become two way streets in the future, depending on the ability to get some traffic relief options in that particular area. In the meantime and relative to underpass construction, Mr. Glock said it would be about 16 months before construction can begin. The original schedule would have had construction start this September, but the additional 12 months being asked for to pursue this will make sure all facets of the entry way into downtown and the circulation needs in the best fashion for downtown in the long run are being looked at.</p>	
<p>Mr. Campbell highlighted that Herbert would be turned into a pedestrian walkway with cafés and restaurants along it; it turns into the 10<sup>th</sup> street alley which the Congress Street stakeholders are looking to expand and also make that a pedestrian walkway.</p>	

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Mr. Glock said there are still some key issues that need Mayor and Council guidance. One is the relocated and expanded underpass will leave very few, if any, historical features in the eyes of the Historic Preservation Office. Also, during construction, access between 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Congress Street can not be maintained. However, that could offer some timesavings because in the original plan one underpass or the other would have remained open during construction, adding 6-7 months in construction and an increase in cost. There may be some short-term hardship in losing that linkage during the construction, but in the long run it will end up being a better project.

Ms. Trasoff noted that Stone and 6<sup>th</sup> are not that far and asked if Stone Avenue could be made into the historic gateway?

Mr. Glock said that Mayor and Council have directed staff to take a look at that portion of the Barraza-Aviation Park from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Church. The Warehouse Arts District Master Plan recommended the portion of Barraza Aviation that was south of the railroad tracks be left on the north side of the tracks. By doing so, the original parkway recommendations associated with the Stone Avenue underpass no longer require it to be removed and rebuilt. In all the years that the citizen committee has been supporting and advising the City, retaining one of the three underpasses has always been one of their goals. The original plan would have forsaken the Stone Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpasses, so the goal was to keep the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpass. But now that the Stone Avenue underpass can be retained at its current location, the fact that the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpass will be expanded and relocated may be acceptable.

Ms. Trasoff said what she liked about the project was the blending of transportation needs with land-use planning, so it's not looking at one or the other, but meshing the two. She asked about possible closures along Toole Avenue and specifically whether that is a requisite part of the plan? Mr. Campbell explained that he has talked with stakeholders and it may end up being kept open, that's flexible.

Vice Mayor Leal was impressed with solutions offered in revised plans and asked about construction schedules? Mr. Glock responded that the design and permitting process is 16-18 months, and a 12-18 month construction period. The construction period is lengthy because of the complexities associated with building the underpass in the north-south bound section while at the same time accommodating railroad traffic overhead.

Vice Mayor Leal inquired if time may be saved if there was more than one

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<p>crew shift during construction. Mr. Glock said he could look at multiple shifts when evaluating the project budget with our construction management at risk. There is a need to be sensitive to the residential area to the west and concern about noise impacts during construction.</p> <p>Chair Trasoff mentioned that two weeks ago, the two groups couldn't have been farther apart, and thanked them for working together. What's interesting and exciting she noted is the amount of input and excitement being generated from the private sector? They are actively pursuing redevelopment options and bringing them forward. The net result will be much better developments in the downtown.</p> <p>Mr. Campbell noted this wasn't a Jim Glock/Jim Campbell proposal. He said he met with a lot of the neighbors and got their input about the traffic issues, etc., so it's their plan as well.</p> <p>Chair Trasoff asked if the alleyways and pedestrian-ways could still be used for access when there are shows going in and out of either the Congress Hotel or Rialto Theatre? Mr. Campbell responded, yes, it could be used for those purposes and/or pedestrian/café ways.</p> <p>Mr. Glock said although there are some costs associated with the redesign of the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpass, there are some costing savings with building only one underpass. Also, the land that has been assembled will draw a much better price when sold.</p> <p>Chair Trasoff commented that the tunnel would be really modern. But asked if it would have plenty of room for both the historic and modern streetcars? Mr. Glock said all the public safety issues would be addressed in the new design as well as the large amount of pedestrian traffic we see during special events.</p> <p>Vice Mayor Leal made a motion for staff to move forward on the project. Council Member Ibarra seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (3-0).</p>	
<b>4. Call to the Audience</b>	
<p>John Burr of the Armory Park Neighborhood asked if the new tunnel being planned would be aligned with the previously planned tunnel with two trolley lanes and two traffic lanes, bike lanes and pedestrian access? Or, is it an entirely new redesign and you have to get the railroad to approve it again? Since saving the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue has been going through a public process</p>	

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<p>for the last 10-15 years, is a historic-looking underpass going to be created?</p> <p>Mr. Glock said staff would be looking at the underpass cross-section to see which one fits best from an engineering standpoint. Three spans were cheaper than one long span, but we'll look at all options. Given that we aren't building both tunnels, we have more flexibility with the budget so we may go back to a single span, which would open the underpass up considerably for the bicycle and pedestrian experience. With respect to permitting with the railroad we took a couple of steps back, because we are looking at an alignment that differs from both the existing historic underpass and the one we have in the current plan. A key feature of the Plaza Centro plan is to move the southern end of the tunnel to align better with Congress Street, more so than our current plan does. One of the challenges we will be establishing grades so we can maintain the operation of the historic trolley. He would imagine that the final underpass would have historic architectural features associated with it so people can have some sense of what it looked like when it was built in 1916.</p> <p>Mr. Campbell stated that in the current plan the streetcar and cars would share a lane. There would be a north and south lane just like 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, with a bike lane and pedestrian access.</p> <p>Chair Trasoff asked if the bike lanes would have their own lane so that the safety issue is removed? Mr. Campbell responded, yes, it is mandatory.</p> <p>Vice Mayor Leal said the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpass probably wasn't even attractive when it was new. It would be a happy thought to make the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpass look like the Stone Avenue underpass, and have some asymmetry in the aesthetics in two parts of downtown and end up with something that is prettier than what we have today.</p> <p>Vice Chair Trasoff thanked everyone and said she was pleased with the progress on both projects. The next subcommittee meeting will take place on April 6, 2006, not March 30<sup>th</sup>.</p>	
<p><b>5. Adjournment</b></p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 5:34 p.m.</p>	